

Lake Sun Leader

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Stroke/ STEMI centers will save minutes, lives

Lake of the Ozarks, Mo. - That far too many people die from heart disease is a fact few would argue. While there are positive lifestyle steps one can take to minimize the risks – most notably diet change and exercise – if a heart attack or stroke should strike you or a loved one, Missouri is in the process of streamlining emergency response.

On Tuesday, the Missouri Ambulance Association honored lake area legislator Dr. Wayne Cooper for sponsoring House Bill 1790. The bill, which was signed into law by the governor earlier this summer, creates a unified statewide system that handles heart attacks and strokes much like trauma centers.

When a person suffers a heart attack or stroke, emergency crews will now transport the patient to designated stroke and/or STEMI centers. This will save valuable time during a crisis in which every minute is critically important.

Although the bill just recently became law, the state health department has already taken steps to implement a statewide system of stroke and STEMI centers. A Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force, which includes more than 100 members of the emergency medical community, was formed last November and has been meeting to discuss how to build the new system.

We join the Missouri Ambulance Association in applauding the work of Dr, Cooper and his counterpart in the state Senate, Charlie Shields of St. Joseph, for pushing this important piece of legislation through the last session.